

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BRUSSE 00966 131933Z

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ACTION EUR-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-14 NSC-10 NSCE-00 PM-03 SPC-01 SAM-01

CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 DODE-00 L-02 PRS-01

OMB-01 EB-03 TRSE-00 DRC-01 /059 W

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R 131825Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9903

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USDEL MC BRUSSELS

USNMR SHAPE

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 0966

LIMIDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, BEXP, NATO

SUBJECT: REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT FOR F-104G

REF: STATE 23571 AND OSLO 594

1. THIS EMBASSY AND OTHERS, ALONG WITH USNATO AND USCINCEUR, HAVE FURNISHED VIEWS AT LENGTH AND IN DETAIL ON THE VARIOUS IMPORTANT CONSEQUENCES THAT WILL FLOW FROM THE DECISION OUR ALLIES REACH ON A REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT TO SERVE WESTERN DEFENSE OVER THE NEXT TWO DECADES. WE HAVE ALSO SUGGESTED WAYS IN WHICH THE PROSPECTS FOR SELECTION OF AN AMERICAN PLANE MIGHT BE ENHANCED. WE ARE PLEASED
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PAGE 02 BRUSSE 00966 131933Z

THAT THIS KEY QUESTION IS THE SUBJECT OF HIGH-LEVEL ATTENTION IN

WASHINGTON.

2. WE BELIEVE THAT WASHINGTON'S JOB WILL BE MADE EASIER IF, BEYOND CONSIDERATIONS OF COMMERCIAL ADVANTAGE, BURDEN-SHARING AND COMPARATIVE TECHNOLOGY, PRIMARY ATTENTION IS GIVEN TO ONE OVER-RIDING QUESTION: ARE WE PREPARED, OR CAN WE AFFORD, TO PERMIT A SHIFT IN WESTERN DEFENSE FROM ITS CURRENT ATLANTIC BASE TO A EUROPEAN BASE? TO ANSWER IN THE AFFIRMATIVE IS TO ABANDON THE CONCEPT OF THE INDIVISIBILITY OF WESTERN SECURITY INTERESTS AND TO FORCE A RE-EXAMINATION OF THE US-EUROPEAN RELATIONSHIP. IF THE ANSWER IS NO, THEN POLITICAL-STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS LEAVE NO ALTERNATIVE TO THE REPLACEMENT OF F-104G BY AN AMERICAN AIRCRAFT. IF WASHINGTON AGREES WITH THIS CONCLUSION, THEN THERE SHOULD BE NO DIFFICULTY IN DECIDING WHETHER OR NOT TO PLEDGE TO POTENTIAL PURCHASERS SOME OF THOSE U.S. GOVERNMENT ASSURANCES THAT THEY SEEK.

3. WE BELIEVE THAT AS THE EUROPEANS DISCUSS AMONG THEMSELVES THE RELATIVE ADVANTAGES OF CHOOSING BETWEEN AN AMERICAN AND A FRENCH AIRCRAFT (SEE OSLO 594), THE US GOVERNMENT SHOULD NOW DETERMINE THE ASSURANCES THAT IT WILL BE PREPARED TO GIVE TO POTENTIAL PURCHASERS. I BELIEVE, TOO, THAT THE US MUST MAKE THIS DETERMINATION NOW ALL THE MORE SO BECAUSE WE SIMPLY CANNOT COUNT ON OUR ALLIES TO APPRECIATE FULLY THE FACT THAT THEIR DECISION WILL IN EFFECT CONSTITUTE A CHOICE BETWEEN TWO CONCEPTS OF WESTERN SECURITY. THE US MUST EASE THEIR CHOICE, AND IT CAN DO SO BY SATISFYING THE MORE MUNDANE NEEDS THAT PREOCCUPY THEM--SUPPORT AND LONG-TERM PARTICIPATION. STRAUSS-HUPE

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